

## IN THE CLAIMS:

Sub  
B1

1. (Amended) A communications system comprising:  
a plurality of regional ground stations;

AS a plurality of satellites located in an elliptical sub-geostationary orbit with respect to the earth, said satellites operating in a service area in a synchronized manner to provide continuous coverage to said service area, said satellites generating a plurality of beams with variable beam widths to obtain a substantially uniform cell size covering said service area; and

a plurality of user terminals within the service area receiving communication signals from the satellite.

Sub  
B1

24. (Amended) A method as recited in claim 22 wherein said step of defining at least two satellite orbits comprises defining at least four orbits.

25. (Amended) A method of developing a customized satellite constellation comprising the steps of:

AK developing a first satellite constellation having a first set of satellites having regional coverage having a first service area, wherein said first constellation comprises a first plurality of satellites located in an elliptical sub-geostationary orbit with respect to the earth, said satellites operating in a service area in a synchronized manner to provide continuous coverage to said service area, said satellites generating a plurality of beams with variable beam widths formed as a function of orbit position to obtain a substantially uniform cell size covering said service area;

launching a second set of satellites to form a second satellite constellation having primary market coverage in cooperation with said first set of satellites to have a second service area greater than said first service area.

AG 26. (Amended) A method as recited in claim 25 comprising launching a third set of satellites to form a third satellite constellation having optimized landmass coverage in cooperation with said first set of satellites and said second set of satellites having a third service area greater than said second service area.

Please add the following new claims:

Sub B1  
ADD A7  
32. (New) A communications system comprising:  
a plurality of regional ground stations;  
a plurality of satellites located in an elliptical sub-geostationary orbit with respect to the earth, said satellites operating in a service area in a synchronized manner to provide continuous coverage to said service area, said satellites generating a plurality of beams with variable beam widths that vary as a function of orbital position to obtain a substantially uniform cell size covering said service area; and  
a plurality of user terminals within the service area receiving communication signals from the satellite.

33. (New) A communication system as recited in claim 32 wherein said plurality of satellites operate using a frequency of a GSO satellite.

34. (New) A communication system as recited in claim 33 wherein said plurality of satellites do not operate in a GSO satellite avoidance zone.